

IN RECOGNITION OF RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER ON HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY AND 50TH YEAR AS RABBI

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the achievements of Rabbi Arthur Schneier, a tireless public servant, friend to all New Yorkers and one of our Nation's foremost spiritual leaders. On Sunday, March 20, 2005, Rabbi Schneier will celebrate his 75th birthday and 50th year as Rabbi at a dinner benefitting the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs at Yeshiva University, which was established in 2004 to promote international peace and the exchange of ideas across cultural divides.

As a young man, Rabbi Schneier was a resident of Nazi-occupied Bucharest, where he experienced firsthand the depths of mankind's capacity for evil. Throughout his distinguished career, Rabbi Schneier has turned his experience as a Holocaust survivor into an incredible drive to stamp out hatred and intolerance throughout the world. In 1965, Rabbi Schneier founded the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, which works to foster religious freedom and human rights and to end ethnic conflicts.

During the long and bloody war in the former Yugoslavia, Rabbi Schneier convened the Religious Summit on the Former Yugoslavia in Switzerland and the Conflict Resolution Conference in Vienna, Austria, mobilizing religious leaders to help end the ethnic violence plaguing leaders to help end the ethnic violence plaguing the region. Additionally, in Sarajevo, Rabbi Schneier met with top government and religious leaders to promote healing and conciliation among the Serbian Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic and Jewish communities.

Rabbi Schneier has also served our Nation in an official capacity as an Alternate U.S. Representative to the U.N. General Assembly.

Additionally, as Chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, Rabbi Schneier was one of three American religious leaders appointed by President Bill Clinton to initiate a dialogue on religious freedom with Chinese President Jiang Zemin. Recently, Rabbi Schneier was a member of the U.S. delegation to the Stockholm International Forum for the Prevention of Genocide.

Rabbi Schneier's accomplishments here at home have been equally impressive. He is the Senior Rabbi of the Park East Synagogue, established in 1890 to serve the Jewish community of the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Centered in the heart of the largest Jewish population outside of Israel, the Synagogue has expanded significantly under Rabbi Schneier's leadership and is an invaluable part of New York City's spiritual and cultural life. Additionally, Rabbi Schneier, recognizing the growing desire among the American Jewish community to provide their children with a strong Jewish education, initiated and led a successful effort to establish a Jewish day school in New York. In 1977, both the Minsk Cultural Center and the Park East Day School

opened, furthering the Synagogue's ability to meet the Upper East Side's educational and social needs.

Mr. Speaker, I request that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Rabbi Arthur Schneier and wishing him a wonderful 75th birthday celebration. Rabbi Schneier's dedication to tolerance and international peace serves as an inspiration to us all.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ATASCOSA COUNTY COMMISSIONER WELDON P. CUDE

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished public service of Commissioner Weldon P. Cude.

A seventh generation Atascosa resident, Mr. Cude started his career as a Texas water well driller in 1984. In 1988 he became Pleasanton's "Young Citizen of the Year," and later became the youngest person elected as an Atascosa County Commissioner.

Commissioner Weldon P. Cude is no stranger to the needs of his community. In 1996, he was elected Pleasanton's "Business Person of the Year," and has served as Director of "The County Bank," the "Atascosa County Economic Development Corporation," and the "Atascosa County Appraisal Board."

Since 1983 Mr. Cude has served as a pillar of the business community. As an independent business person, he has contributed as President of both Premium Well Drilling Incorporated and the Fat Cowboys Steakhouse. He has also served his community as Vice President for Goldwell Investments Incorporated. Employing over 150 employees, he understands the values of hard work and dedication.

Commissioner Weldon P. Cude lives in Atascosa with his wife Gayla Cude, and his five daughters: Aubry, Stephanie, Jennie, Lindsey, and Jessica.

It is a pleasure to recognize the accomplishments of Commissioner Cude, his dedication to the community has helped to make Atascosa a better place to live and work.

Mr. Speaker, County Commissioner Weldon P. Cude is an exemplary public servant. I am proud to have the chance to thank him here today for all he has done for his fellow Texans.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SACRIFICE OF SERGEANT MICHAEL ESPISITO

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and sacrifice of Sergeant Michael Espisito, U.S. Army. On March 18, 2004, SGT Espisito made the ultimate sacrifice for his Nation—he gave his life while

fighting on the frontiers of freedom in the small town of Miam Do, Afghanistan.

Referring to heroes of World War II, Sir Winston Churchill once stated, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." I believe that Churchill's sentiments reign truer than ever when applied to today's historically small contingent of service men and women. The challenge facing us is similarly great: the defeat of terrorism. But the number bearing that burden has never been so small.

Michael Espisito not only recognized that challenge, he embraced it. He volunteered to serve, to bear that burden, and he loved it. In a letter to Michael's parents, Captain Jorge Cordeiro, Michael's Company Commander, reflected back on the first battle he fought in with Michael. Captain Cordeiro wrote, "I can recall him telling me it was the best day of his life and how proud he felt to have fought for his country."

Assigned as a Team Leader in A Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment of the 10th Mountain Division, Sergeant Espisito took each word in his title to heart.

Team: Sergeant Espisito never cared as much about himself as he did about the men surrounding him, his brothers in arms. He put their interests first; he put their safety first; he put their success ahead of his own. But Michael Espisito's team extended beyond those he fought with. His team was the Army, his family, his Nation and, in many ways, the people of Afghanistan. Just before Sergeant Espisito was mortally wounded in Afghanistan he successfully evacuated two women from the same building in which he was fighting. Those women were on SGT Espisito's team and they were saved because of it.

Leader: In the U.S. Army infantry there is a short slogan that is often repeated: "Follow me!" Michael Espisito didn't just say "follow me," he lived it. He led his men from the front in every combat maneuver they took part in. In so doing, he earned the trust, the respect and the confidence of all around him. As his Battalion Commander wrote of him, "He was a shining example of a soldier and non-commissioned officer to the end." SGT Espisito was leading from the front when he breached a door in an enemy compound and was mortally wounded in an exchange of fire.

Michael Espisito was a special human being. He was different. He was a hero. You get the feeling he was put on this earth to serve. He knew his mission, he understood his roll and he embraced it. And he lived his life, did his work and executed his missions with dignity, vigor and excellence. Our world is better because of his sacrifice but it is poorer because of his loss.

Churchill reminds us how much we owe to those few men and women like Michael Espisito. We owe Michael our commitment to a better world. We owe Michael our commitment to living better, more principled, more service oriented lives. And we owe Michael the memorializing of his life and his sacrifice, best completed by living the lives he would have wished for each us. Michael is gone but he will never be forgotten.